[redacted]

1-16/8/20

PART 1

FOREIGN OFFICE

DEPT. ARABIAN

TITLE: Kuwait : Defence :

Possible attacks : Israel

[redacted]

File No. BK10/18

REFER TO			REFER TO			REFER TO		
DEPT.	NAME	DATE	DEPT.	NAME	DATE	DEPT.	NAME	DATE
B	BBDC	18/5	V	Dept	4/7			
B	Div	22/5	B	AI	5/7			
B	AEDC	24/5		Riv	6/7			
R	Lw	31/5						
B	AEDC.	2/6						
B	DDS	5/6						
B	Div	5/6						
E	MR. Landes	6/6						
	Mr Chaplin	12.6						
	Div	14.6						
	Mr Chaplin	14.6						
B	Div	14 6						
	AEDC	16/6						
	Mr Abbott	20/6						
	Riv	27/6						
B	AA.	29/6						
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FCO 8/679

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(1) 70
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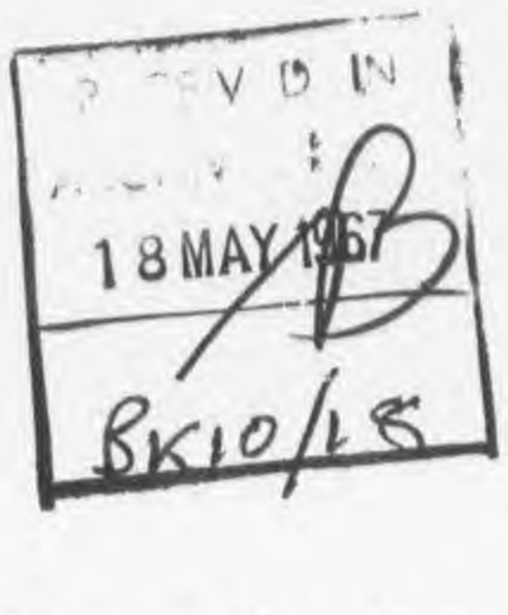

Cypher/Cat A

FLASH KUWAIT TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Telno. 183 18 May 1967

SECRET

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 183 of 18 May
Repeated for information to Bahrain, HQ MIDEAST and Baghdad.

Kuwait Army Emergency Measures.

Mubarak gave OC Klt. the following information this morning and asked him to pass it to HQ. Bahrain:

(a) The Kuwait armed forces have been put on Alert Two (all leave stopped and men recalled),
(b) The Air Defence Regiment with some armour is being deployed round Kuwait international airport,
(c) One infantry battalion has been warned to stand by to emplane (no destination was named but Wright understood Mubarak to mean Syria or Jordan),
(d) Mubarak explained that he was extremely worried that if fighting broke out between Israel, Syria and the United Arab Republic, the whole Middle East might flare up and Kuwait might be the target of opportunist attacks from her neighbours.

2. All this seems unnecessarily alarmist. The battalion at (c) may be in fulfilment of an undertaking to the U.A.C., although we know of none. As seen from here, risk of Iraqi attacks whilst Arabs are occupied with Israel seems remote.

Foreign Office pass Flash HQ MIDEAST 12.

Mr. Arthur

Sent 0944/18 May
Received 1021/18 May

[Sent to D.C.C.]

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PA Allen 5/5

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Ptr. tel from Kuwait attaché

RECEIVED IN
ARCHIVES
19 MAY 1967
BK 10/18

5
2 19/5

68

B18 KUWAIT ARONY ON ALERT, AT UNIFIED COMMAND'S DISPOSAL

(KUWAIT RADIO) THE CABINET HELD A SPECIAL MEETING THIS MORNING UNDER THE CROWN PRINCE AND PREMIER, SHAYKA JABIR AL-AHMAD AL-JABIR. IT DISCUSSED THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE LIGHT OF ZIONIST THREATS AND THE DANGER THEY INMOLVE.

THE CABINET DECIDED TO AUTHORISE FOREIGN MINISTER SHAYKH SABAH AL-AHMAD AL-JABIR TO INFORM TO THE UNIFIED ARAB COMMAND COMMANDER, GEN. ALI ALI AMIR, THAT THE CABINET HAS DECIDED TO PLACE THE KUWAITI ARMY AND ALL ITS POTENTIAL ON ALERT, AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE UNIFIED ARAB COMMAND. ALL PREPARATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE TO IMPLEMENT THE UNIFIED ARAB COMMAND'S ORDERS AS SOON AS THEY ARE RECEIVED. |X Arab.

END BBC MON 18:5 CB (KY) (TVN) 1148

Reuter with tel from Kuwait reporting X' 2 PA 23/5

[redacted]

ARABIAN.

257

V. C. S.

28

M Striking dd 23/5

Extra Kuwait/vrac

Aqaba

(3)

B23 AQABA GULF: KUWAIT SUPPORT FOR CLOSURE

(KUWAIT RADIO) THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MET THIS MORNING AND HEARD A STATEMENT BY CROWN PRINCE AND PREMIER AL-SHAYKH JABIR AL-AHMAD AL-JABIR WHO SAID:

23/5

66

IN VIEW OF THE RECENT EVENTS AND THE U.A.R.'S HEROIC STAND IN CLOSING THE GULF OF AQABA TO THE ENEMY, THE AMIR HAS DECIDED TO SEND THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO CAIRO WITH A MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT NASSER. THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO SUPPORT THE U.A.R.'S STAND IN EXERCISING ITS RIGHT TO CLOSE THE GULF OF AQABA.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO DECIDED TO BEGIN ENLISTMENT OF VOLUNTEERS IN KUWAIT.

END BBC MON 1236 23/5 JM (KY) (TVN)

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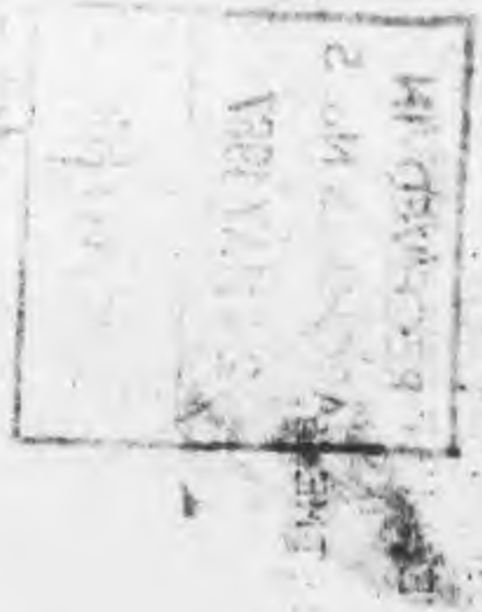
24 MAY 1967
BK 10/18.

24/5

67



Arabian Dept.
Room 25-7
KCS

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Encl. (4)
Ans 25/5

BRITISH EMBASSY
KUWAIT

64

21 May, 1967.

(10711/67)

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 5
30 MAY 1967
BK 10/18

Dear Antony,

Palestine Day

Palestine Day (15 May) was celebrated with rather more than usual vigour in Kuwait this year. The main event was a mass rally at Shuwaikh Secondary School at which the Foreign Minister, Shaikh Sabah al Ahmad, delivered an address in which he took the opportunity of reiterating Kuwait's call for the sinking of differences between the Arab States and renewed cooperation in the common cause. The speech was well received and was twice interrupted by fascist-type shouting in unison.

2. The National Assembly observed the day by standing in silence for one minute during its session on 16 May. This was followed by a noisy debate in which the Deputies asked that telegrams should be sent to the Arab League, the United Nations and other international organisations. The Minister of Defence and Interior, Shaikh Sa'ad, added his voice to that of Shaikh Sabah al Ahmad the day before in calling for the reconvention of the Arab Summit Conferences as the first step in setting this and all other Arab issues.

3. Apart from the calls for the resumption of the Summit Conferences, these manifestations could normally be dismissed as so much talk, the only point of interest being that the Kuwait Government should feel the need to talk so vehemently. In practice Kuwait has if anything done less for the Palestine cause in the last year than in previous years. The last two training courses of Palestinians resident in Kuwait for the Palestine Liberation Army contained only 50 men each, while previous courses had numbered 200; and the Kuwait Army's "commando battalion" which is "earmarked" for the United Arab Command remains only a skeleton force which can be given body in an emergency by drawing companies from the normal infantry battalions which have received commando training. But recent events appear to suggest that the Kuwait Government like other Arab Governments are, at least to some extent, prisoners of their own words. We should like to think that the Kuwait Army's alert and the deployment round the airfield, with the

/embodied

A.E.D. Chamier, Esq.,
Arabian Department,
Foreign Office.

Su 1/5
FA Ans 2/6

CONFIDENTIAL

embodied commando battalion warned to stand-by to emplane (the Ambassador's telegram number 183 of 18 May - not to all), were only symbolic gestures: Kuwait's contribution of a battalion could make little difference to the United Arab Command. The Kuwait Government have however been at pains to give the appearance of being in earnest and the following statement was issued after an extraordinary cabinet meeting on 18 May:

"The Cabinet reviewed the prevailing situation in the Arab area in the light of the Zionists threats and the serious consequences which these threats envisage. The Cabinet entrusted to the Foreign Minister, Shaikh Sabah Al Ahmed, to inform General Ali Ali Amer, Commander in Chief of the Unified Arab Command, of the Cabinet's decision to place the Kuwaiti Army under alert and at the disposal of the Unified Arab Command. The Cabinet also took the necessary preparations for implementation of the Unified Arab Command orders as soon as they are received."

4. I am sending copies of this letter to the Chanceries in Amman, Damascus, Cairo, Tel Aviv, Baghdad and Bahrain.

Yours ever

(J.A.N. Graham)

SECRET

(5) Ent Pal 25/5

ARCHIVES No 5
30 MAY 1967
BK 10/18

BRITISH EMBASSY
KUWAIT

63

21 May, 1967.

(10711/67)

Dear Anthony.

Palestine

(P4)

Further to my letter 10711/67 of to-day's date about the celebration of Palestine Day in Kuwait and the Government's reaction to recent events on the border with Israel, the Prime Minister, Shaikh Jabir al Ahmad, took the opportunity of the official opening of a new brick plant yesterday to make a public statement on the Arab-Israeli situation. Shaikh Jabir started by repeating the Kuwait Government's call for Arabs to compose their differences. In an ominously communist-style phrase he said that differences in the internal systems of states need not hinder peaceful co-existence and fruitful cooperation for Arab unity, at least on common vital Arab issues. Israel had exploited Arab differences. Nineteen years had passed in demands for the restoration of Palestine. How long was this to continue ? Why did they not put all their weight into one decisive battle to wipe out the disgrace which had remained and would remain so long as they did not match words with deeds. Kuwait was honoured to react against an attack on any Arab country. Shaikh Jabir praised the U.A.R. for its stand in calling for the withdrawal of the U.N. Emergency Force from Sinai, and said that the Kuwait Government had placed the Kuwait Army under the orders of the United Arab Command, and that the Minister of Defence had been in touch with his Iraqi counterpart to facilitate the movement of Kuwaiti troops through Iraq if required.

last words today. pmy 7/6

2. General Mubarak has confirmed to Colonel Wright that he has indeed been instructed to take orders direct from Aly Aly Amer. One battalion of the Kuwait Army is ready to move (by requisitioned Kuwait Airways aircraft) direct to Amman, or wherever else the U.A.C. orders. A further brigade could if necessary follow by land (by road to Basra and thence by train to Baghdad and presumably on again by road). When Wright commented that this would leave Kuwait very bare Mubarak said "It will never happen". In Wright's opinion the Kuwait Army's transport and tanks might well not reach Basra, unless the K.L.T. went too, which the Kuwaitis would be as reluctant as ourselves to allow.

3. I am copying this letter to the recipients of my previous one.

Yours ever

(J.A.N. Graham)

PLO

pm MR Beeley - see also -/4 NEWS PA Dam 14/6 CE Chamier 21/6

A.E.D. Chamier, Esq.,
Arabian Department,
Foreign Office.

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(7)

enter file

BRITISH EMBASSY

KUWAIT

61

28 May, 1967.

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No 5
2- JUN 1967
BK 10118

(10711/67)

Rydon Richard.

N/R.

Palestine

Please refer to our telegram number 197 of 27 May (not to all) reporting the warning given by the Kuwait Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Ambassador.

2. In addition to the British and American Ambassadors, Shaikh Sabah al Ahmad also saw the Soviet Ambassador and the French Chargé d'Affaires. The former was congratulated on the Soviet policy in the present crisis. The latter was given the same message as ourselves and the Americans. He has told me that he deliberately did not probe what the Kuwait Government meant by 'aggression' or 'take steps against the interests' of those who supported Israel, beyond asking whether the second phrase covered breaking off relations: Shaikh Sabah al Ahmad said that the Kuwait Government had not considered that.

3. These approaches by the Government have been echoed during the week by the National Assembly and the press. At the Assembly's meeting on 23 May the Prime Minister made a statement supporting the U.A.R. and at the same time explained that the Foreign Minister was going to Cairo to discuss the situation with President Nasser. This statement was well received, though without debate. During the week it was reported that a number of deputies had proposed that 10% or even 50%, should be deducted from the salaries of all Government employees to finance the war to liberate Palestine. However this resolution was not debated at the Assembly's meeting on 27 May, when a number of other vigorous proposals were aired without much action being taken. These included suggestions to send telegrams denouncing President Johnson's declaration on the Gulf of Aqaba, and the attitude of Iran in supplying oil to Israel, and proposals that Kuwait should cut off economic relations with the U.S.A. and diplomatic relations with the U.S.A., Denmark and Canada. In fact the attitude of the Assembly was fairly predictable, though there seem to be the makings of the usual dispute between the Sunni deputies and the Shi'i deputies of Iranian origin over the attitude of Iran.

4. The attitude of the press has also been predictable. For once it has been united, in its support of the U.A.R. and its condemnation of Israel and those in the West who support her. While the crisis continues, other news receives scant coverage. The only crack in this solid front was a leader in yesterday's 'Daily News' entitled "Should We Fail" which seemed to recognise that the sudden and unwanted Arab unity was a poor substitute for

/properly

M.S. Weir, Esq.,
Arabian Department,
Foreign Office.

E Department 11/6

PA 12/6 d Schaus 5/6

CONFIDENTIAL

properly co-ordinated military planning, and that the result might well be a catastrophe. It concluded however that even death was preferable to continued dishonour.

5. The Government's decision to send troops to Cairo (our telegram No.196 of 26 May (not to all)) has been well received. General Mubarak left Kuwait suddenly for Cairo on 27 May, presumably to arrange for the reception of the Commando battalion which is now thought to be flying to Cairo to-night and tomorrow. All Kuwait Airways aircraft have been commandeered until 31 May to undertake the airlift, and there is to be a ground parade this evening at 6 Brigade camp to mark the troops' departure. Meanwhile plans are still going ahead to move a brigade (or anyway a strong battalion group comprising probably in all 25 tanks, one infantry battalion, a battery of 25-pounders, a troop of Bofors, 12 Ferrets and an armoured car regiment)later in the week (our telegram No.195 (not to all)): the infantry battalion, it seems, is to go by air on 1 June, with a Headquarter group and the heavy equipment by sea on a date, and ship, as yet unknown. There is talk of requisitioning tankers, filling them up to bring their decks level with the jetty and driving the tanks on board: we do not know whether this would be feasible, but it sounds risky.

6. In Kuwait in general, the situation is of course the main topic of conversation, but apart from that there is little sign that anything out of the ordinary is afoot. The call has gone out to Palestinians and others living in Kuwait to report to their local police stations to volunteer for service and a number have done so, though we do not know how many. The general feeling is that in the first instance it is the Palestinians who should join up and do the fighting, though of course the rest of the Arabs are right behind them ! We have now heard however that reservists (those who have left the Army in the last 2 years) are being required to report. Special blood banks are being set up, and the public are being encouraged to give blood or to register as potential donors. This may not be popular, since the hospitals pay £10 a pint for blood in normal times. There have been no demonstrations of any kind or any sign of them as yet.

7. To sum up, public feeling at all levels in Kuwait appears to be firmly behind Nasser in the stand he has taken in forcing the withdrawal of the U.N. and in blockading the Gulf of Aqaba. At the more responsible levels this support is coloured by the hope that the whole situation can be solved without recourse to force by either side, although few, at the moment, would regard as satisfactory a settlement which involved any major concession on the part of the U.A.R.

8. I am sending copies of this letter to the Chanceries in Amman, Baghdad, Bahrain, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Jedda and Teheran.

Yours ever

(J.A.N. Graham)

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

(8)

Spear given to M Marshall, Pol Dept.

BRITISH EMBASSY

KUWAIT

27 May, 1967.

Qu 59
-2/6-

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 5
5- JUN 1967
BK 10/18

(10711/67)

Dear Frank,

Just my luck to return to the Arab world to find a Palestine crisis! I should like to send you a considered estimate of likely Kuwaiti reactions to all the situations that might arise in the next few days or weeks, but I have not got the feel of this place yet. So what follows is speculation built on unusually insecure foundations.

2. The press, radio and television push out the same message as in any Arab country: Nasser is the hero, the Arabs are at one again, victory is nigh, and the Western powers, if they care for their interests, had better keep out of the way. But the Kuwaitis I have seen - not very many so far - have not communicated these ideas to me, perhaps because they have too much Arab politeness to say unpleasant things at our first meeting. Neither the members of my staff, nor other British subjects I have seen, have detected so far any real signs of unfriendliness in the people they know and work with.

3. Nevertheless there are vague threats in the air: suggestions that the oil will be stopped or that diplomatic relations will be broken off if we intervene, whether in the Gulf of Aqaba or elsewhere, in support of Israel. And we have to remember that there are nearly as many "other Arabs" here (including Egyptians who would like to see us in a mess) as there are Kuwaitis. Arab confidence seems to me to be higher, and expectations more sanguine, than in the past; and if I am right, the disappointment of these expectations will stir up a wave of frustration which may be too strong to control. At any rate, the authorities are worried enough to have suggested to the K.O.C. that special precautions should be taken to protect key points in the Company's installations, and unobtrusive measures have been taken to this end.

4. Such solicitude on the part of the Kuwait Government is a good sign. However it is hard to avoid the feeling that they will have to do something if things go wrong and the West is held to blame. The pressure on them will of course be all the stronger if other Arab governments take action against Western interests, or if a Kuwaiti "expeditionary force" somehow gets mixed up in any fighting. It is very difficult for me to judge their real attitudes and intentions: I have only heard the views of the Foreign Minister, as reported in my telegrams nos. 189 and 197. It is probable that the Amir, and perhaps even the Prime Minister, will be more cautious; but I do not think it would be wise to seek an

/interview

T.F. Brenchley, Esq., C.M.G.,
Foreign Office,
London, S.W. 1.

Seen by Mr Brenchley & Mr Smiley

PA

8/6

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

interview with the Amir, at any rate in present circumstances, unless you give me some specific instructions.

5. So I can only guess. The most likely measure is a temporary stoppage of the oil combined with careful protection and maintenance of the installations. A total cut-off could not last long (though the Kuwaitis have probably not hoisted this in) since no oil production means not only no revenue (which might be borne) but also no gas, and no gas means no water and no electricity. It would however be possible to supply sufficient gas on a greatly reduced output of oil for export to Asia only.

6. Stoppage of oil might be accompanied by action against other British and/or American commercial interests, where they could be attacked without clear damage to the Kuwaitis themselves: the B.B.M.E. concession springs to mind in this connexion. Or there might, I suppose, be a break in diplomatic relations, as an Egyptian in the Ministry of Guidance hinted to a B.B.C. correspondent today, though I think the Amir would be reluctant to take this step: perhaps a compromise might get rid of my American colleague and me! Or we might be asked to remove the Kuwait Liaison Team (on which I am telegraphing separately); but here again there would be difficulties, from the Kuwaiti point of view, for the plan to support Kuwait against aggression would presumably become inoperative if the team withdrew.

7. Demonstrations against the British and American Embassies? Possibly, for such actions are part of the common currency of diplomacy East of Suez, and Kuwait, which has no history of riot, might nevertheless on this occasion be tempted to copy Damascus, Cairo or Baghdad. But I hope and believe that Al Sabah may be shrewd enough to see that the ultimate victims of demonstrations might well be themselves.

8. There are other things the Kuwait Government could do. However, the ties that bind them to us are still strong: it is not easy for them to hurt us without hurting themselves. But we shall be lucky if we come out of the present crisis without damage to our relations. Fortunately for us, the Arabs are not a thoroughgoing people, so we may fare better than rational speculation might suggest. But we should be unwise to bank on this for ever.

Yours ever

Geoffrey.

(G.G. Arthur)

B70 KUWAITI PREMIER WELCOMES JORDAN-U.A.R. AGREEMENT

(KUWAIT RADIO) THE CROWN PRINCE AND PREMIER, SHEIKH JABIR AL-AHMAD AL-JABIR HAS WELCOMED THE JOINT DEFENCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE U.A.R. AND JORDAN. IN A STATEMENT TO THE LEBANESE PAPER 'AL-ANWAR', HE AFFIRMED THAT THE ARABS HAD NEVER HAD A MORE SUITABLE OPPORTUNITY TO WAGE THE LIBERATION WAR AND TO ATTAIN VICTORY.

58

HIS HIGHNESS WARNED THE GREAT POWERS AGAINST RESISTING THE ARAB STATES. HE SAID THE ARABS WOULD ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE AND REPLY TO IT, WHATEVER THE CONSEQUENCES.

MF BBC MON 2/6 CDF

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6- JUN 1967
BK 10/18

B70 WELCOMES (2):

HE DECLARED THAT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, KUWAIT HAD DECIDED TO SHED ITS BLOOD AND TO SACRIFICE ITS NATIONAL INCOME IN THE LIBERATION BATTLE.

THE CROWN PRINCE AND PREMIER STRESSED THAT RIGHT, HONOUR, AND JUSTICE WERE ON TH SDE OF THE ARABS. HE ADVOCATED GRASPING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DESTROY THE STATE OF GANGS AND CRIME.

END BBC MON 2/6 1930 CDF (KY)

BK

EMBASSY
OF
THE STATE OF KUWAIT
LONDON

سفارة دولة الكويت
لندن

10

40 DEVONSHIRE STREET W1.

RECEIVED IN
CHIV No. 5
8 JUN 1967
BK10/18

57

Ref: 1/100/228-334

5th June, 1967.

The Ambassador of the State of Kuwait presents his compliments to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and has the honour to inform him that he is instructed by the Kuwaiti Government to convey to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the following message.

"H.H. Amir issued today decree declaring defensive war with Israel concert with Arab States. All potentialities subjected to the battle".

The Ambassador of the State of Kuwait avails himself of this opportunity to renew to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the assurance of his highest consideration.

Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for
Foreign Affairs,
The Foreign Office,
London, S.W. 1.

I would agree subject to the views of U.N. (Middleton) Legal Advisers

No objections. 20/6

(Crawford and Oliver) 20/6

E Dept (Mr Saunders)

Make a plain ack. Any views on this order?

I suppose G. Dept

1976

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RECEIVED IN
ARCHIVES No. 5
9- JUN 1967

BRITISH EMBASSY
KUWAIT

(10711)

4 June, 1967.

Dear Nicholas,

PALESTINE

Apart from the departure of the Kuwait expeditionary force (the "Yarmuk Brigade") to Egypt, which we reported in telegram No.201 of 29 May (not to all), there have been no developments in Kuwait worthy of report by telegram. It might however be useful if I give you a review of current developments and press and public reactions.

2. As reported in our telegram under reference, the first battalion of the Kuwait expeditionary force left here by air on 29 May. It has been followed through the week by other units and by a headquarters under Brigadier Salih. The current plan, according to the Kuwait Liaison Team, is to ship the armoured units (now to be composed of 15 Centurions and not 25 as previously reported), together with a regiment of Saladins, 12 Ferrets, a Battery of 25 pounders and an LAA troop, from Mina al Ahmadi by chartered freighter in the next few days. The total force will amount to about 1200 men. The infantry already in Egypt are installed at Fayid but the headquarters is forward in the Gaza strip and is reconnoitring a sector on the extreme left flank which the Kuwaitis will take over.

3. On the home front perhaps the most important development has been the issue by the Kuwait Oil Workers' Union of a statement that they would "strike without mercy at all imperialist interests in Kuwait, if any imperialist party attempts to interfere in the battle in favour of Israel .....British and American imperialism should be assured that their interests will be exposed to danger if they support the enemy ..... The oil workers of Kuwait call upon their brother Arab workers to get ready to destroy all imperialist interests, oil and non-oil, in prosecution of the sacred battle." This statement was carried in a special supplement of Al Talia which appeared on 27 May. On 24 May the same paper had carried a statement by the President of the Kuwait Federation of Labour that Kuwaiti workers would not allow Kuwait's oil to be used in the battle against the Arabs and that they were ready to respond to any call issued by the Federation of Arab Workers, which was meeting at that time in Damascus. The resolutions adopted at that meeting were duly published in Al Talia of 31 May. They called on

/Arab

M.S. Weir, Esq.,
Arabian Department,
Foreign Office.

Arab workers to form armed worker detachments to assist the regular troops and outlined a number of objectives for them should war break out, including the "destruction of oil-wells, pipe-lines and constructions from which the enemy benefit" and the "immobilisation of imperialist establishments and bases."

4. These statements lend more colour to the theory in our telegram No.202 of 29 May that the Kuwait Government's purpose in warning us and the Americans that they would "act against our interests" if they or we supported Israel, was to pre-empt threats by labour organisations and to retain control of developments in their own hands. Further evidence of this can be drawn from the remarks of the Amir to Ahmad Hijazi, a senior member of the Kuwait Oil Company and a personal friend of the Amir, who had called to say goodbye before going on leave. According to Hijazi the Amir was worried about possible U.A.R.-inspired sabotage of the oil installations, but thought that the despatch of Kuwaiti troops and the threat to cut off oil would effectively inhibit the mischief makers. It could also be, of course, that the Kuwait Government have acted in the way they have, so promptly and so publicly, in order to forestall requests for money. We have received one report from a good source that the Amir himself has given Nasser KD 5.0m - presumably from his personal account since, if it were public money, he would require Assembly approval; and we have also heard that the Kuwait Government have undertaken to pay Nasser some of the costs incurred in deploying the Egyptian Army to Sinai. The American Ambassador has indeed elevated Nasser's wish to get his hands on Kuwait's wealth, in particular the recent wind-fall of KD 33.0m under the Supplemental Agreement, to the position of one of Nasser's chief aims in engineering the crisis. Important as we like to think Kuwait to be, we cannot believe that this can have been a major factor in Egyptian planning ! But any money that can be screwed out of Kuwait is no doubt a welcome by-product.

5. If we are right, the Kuwait Government's apparently extremist actions have been conducted with a view to securing that worse should not be required of them. On this basis the American Embassy have found some comfort in two conversations with senior Kuwaitis during the last week. First, when Lee, the Managing Director of the Kuwait Oil Company, asked the Prime Minister on 29 May whether the talks that representatives of B.P. and Gulf were due to have in Kuwait on 1 and 2 June should go ahead as planned or not, Shaikh Jabir brushed his doubts aside and plunged into a discussion of the extraction of sulphur from Kuwaiti oil. Secondly, the Minister of Finance and Oil told the American Ambassador on 30 May that the Kuwait Government had done a study of disinvestment as a possible means of striking back at the United States. The only result had been to show the advantages of further investment in New York and he had that day given instructions to move £10m there from London.

/6.

6. That particular switch of funds is not very cheerful news for us, of course; but we can perhaps take comfort from the general conclusion the Kuwaitis have reached. We presume that they have done a similar study on London; we cannot ask them and can only hope that it will have shown the unwisdom of moving out of sterling on a large scale. We know however that there have been a large number of withdrawals from the local banks, mainly by small or medium non-Kuwaiti Arab depositors. This will presumably entail some fall in the reserves which the banking system holds abroad, and notably in London.

7. Both the Americans and we conclude from all this that if the Kuwait Government decide that they have to take some action against the West, they will stop the oil and hope that that, coupled with their despatch of troops, will be enough to contain the presures on them for more stringent measures. By acting quickly and decisively as they have done, the Kuwait Government have tried to build up some credit for themselves in Arab public opinion. However, there is obviously a risk on this highly emotional issue that if other Arab states, e.g. Iraq, take more active measures against Western interests, the Kuwait Government may feel compelled to follow suit. The Kuwait Minister of Finance and Oil leaves to-day for Baghdad and will no doubt there put his name to the Iraqi Government's proposals. But this alone will not commit the Kuwait Government to follow Iraq regardless. Everything will depend on how the situation develops and what Her Majesty's Government do. An attempt by British ships, with or without American support, to maintain freedom of innocent passage through the Straits of Tiran by force, especially if it were carried out without U.N. backing, could well push the Kuwait Government over the edge. However much many Kuwaitis, including the Amir, might personally regret it, they might in such circumstances break off relations with us and nationalise one or both of the two major British interests here, the Kuwait Oil Company and the British Bank of the Middle East. Our view is that they will avoid doing any of these things as long as they can, but we should not minimise the pressures which could build up against them.

8. There are few outward and visible signs of excitement in Kuwait although the Bofors guns, which were deployed when the crisis first broke, remain visible round the airfield and the distillation plant. The press continues its strident tone, calling for the liberation of "the usurped land". In one particularly un-pleasant phrase the 'Daily News' of 29 May spoke of the duties of the Arab armies to complete the task which Hitler left incomplete, namely to "find the final solution to the problem of the Zionist gangsters", and, mixing its metaphors, the same paper spoke on 2 June of the need to deny Arab oil to the "Axis powers". /the Telegrams of support from/journalists, the lawyers, the students, etc. have been flooding in to the Amir, President Nasser, King Hussein and the National Assembly.

/9.

9. General Mubarak has returned from Cairo well pleased with his reception there and hoping that at least one good thing would come out of the present crisis - that he would get more money to buy the extra tanks and armoured cars he has been asking for. (We hope that if he does, there will be no difficulty in London about agreeing to sell them). Kuwaiti officials will soon be feeling the pinch in that the crisis seems likely to impinge on the leave season. It is reported that the Government is where possible recalling officials who are absent abroad, and that those who are here are cancelling their plans to leave. The Kuwait weekly al Siyasah however reassures Kuwaitis that the necessary financial measures are being taken to make sure that Kuwaitis do not suffer from the present crisis. It emphasises that the reserves are ample to keep Kuwaitis in the style to which they are accustomed for the duration of the war ! Nonetheless it seems likely that all Government employees will be required to make a contribution of 10% of their salaries, and that those in the private sector will be under strong pressure to do likewise. A fund raising meeting was held last night and was addressed by Shaikh Sabah al Ahmad.

10. Some wry amusement has been engendered by a proposal put forward in the National Assembly of 30 May that all Palestinians in Kuwait should be called up for the battle. Not only would the Kuwaitis thus be able to acquit themselves of their own obligations to the struggle, at no cost to themselves, but at the same time they could achieve their desired objective of getting rid of the Palestinians. The only question is, who would run the country in their absence ?

11. Both in press comment and privately the main villain of the piece, Israel apart, has been the United States; but British policy has come in for a good deal of criticism and Denmark and Canada have also been strongly criticised. In retaliation against the last, Kuwait abruptly closed her pavilion at Expo '67 (despite press eulogies earlier in the year, its closure will not, I suspect, leave much of a gap). Every Arab I have talked to, Kuwaiti or non-Kuwaiti, has taken the line that Britain's support for Israel is incomprehensible. Those who are most friendly to the West are downcast at the prospect of an increase in Soviet influence which they regard as inevitable, and argue that at the least we should stand aside, like France, and let them fight it out with Israel, whose expansionist aims and enjoyment of the fruits of her 1956 aggression are the roots of the trouble. What is Aqaba to us or we to Aqaba ?

12. I am sending copies of this to the Chanceries in Amman, Baghdad, Bahrain, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Jedda and Teheran.

Yours ever

(J.A.N. Graham)

51

12

SECRET

Cypher/Cat A

IMMEDIATE KUWAIT TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Telno. 252 8 June, 1967

SECRET

RECEIVED IN CHIVES No. 5
9- JUN 1967
BK 10/18

2 copies sent to R.I. Harland, Bank of England. WRD 9/6

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 252 of 8 June.
Repeated for information to: Washington, Bahrain

Your telegram No. 287: Palestine.

The Amir received me this morning. I began by enquiring what had happened to the Kuwaiti contingent in Egypt. He said he had no idea. He did not seem to care.

2. I then spoke in close accordance with my telegram No. 240 (omitting paragraph 4(c)) as amended by your telegram under reference. The Amir said he would reply point by point, but he must first ask for an undertaking that what he said about oil would remain secret and known to as few people as possible. No reference must be made to it in the House of Commons. Publicity would cause irreparable damage to our relations. I gave the undertaking on your behalf.

3. Oil. The Amir was quite certaim that failure to announce a stoppage would have exposed him to intolerable pressures and resulted in sabotage to the installations. But he did not intend that oil exports to us should in fact be stopped: as long as British and American ports did not 'appear on the manifest', the oil could go wherever we liked. He understood that tankers with destinations like Rotterdam were often re-routed at sea. That was what we should do. All the Kuwait Government wanted was to be able to say that no oil went to the United States and United Kingdom with their knowledge.

4. Radio. The Amir said he did not believe stories of United Kingdom/United States intervention. He had already given orders that imflammatory comment on Kuwait Radio must cease. But it was difficult to prevent them broadcasting news reports from other Arab countries. I said they should at least give equal prominence to your denials. We could not understand how the behaviour of Kuwait Radio (I made much here of Bahrain telegram No. 387 to you) could be reconciled with Kuwait professions of friendship towards us. The Amir promised to see what he could do to restore some balance.

5. Relations with Egypt. The Amir winced at the word "satellite" but did not dispute its aptness. He seemed dazed by the whole situation in the Middle East and kept asking what I thought would happen to King Hussein.

6. B.B.M.E. The Amir said he was no economist. He sent for the Prime Minister, who joined us half way through the meeting. I explained that the B.B.M.E. had sufficient ready assets to meet possible withdrawals but could not get Kuwaiti notes from the Currency Board. If the Bank had to close its doors on Saturday the responsibility would lie with the Kuwait Government. Re regarded the B.B.M.E. as an important British interest: we hoped the Kuwait Government would try to ensure that the Bank did not lose the

/confidence

SECRET

PA 12/1

SECRET

Kuwait telegram No. 252 to Foreign Office

confidence of the public for reasons outside its control. After a lengthy argument the Prime Minister said he could do no more than close all the Banks if a run on one required more cash than the Currency Board could supply.

7. We went over all the points again in the Prime Minister's presence. Much less forthcoming than the Amir, he made no comment on the latter's rehearsal of our earlier conversation. I could not draw him on Egypt at all. He did however agree that efforts should be made to moderate Kuwait Radio.

8. The Prime Minister finally said that whilst we were on the subject of frank consultation there were two things he would like to say to me:

(a) They had recently telegraphed the Bank of England to withdraw a sum from London £25 million was mentioned but it was not clear whether all or only part of this [gp.undec.] transfer from London). They usually received prompt replies to such requests but not this time. Why?

(b) They had instructed the Lombard Bank to make a transfer to Switzerland. The Bank had replied that they could not understand the Kuwaiti instructions and had transferred the sum in question to the Bank of England.

The Prime Minister said these two transactions were causing concern. Could I please get him an explanation?

9. Your telegram No. 291 has arrived since my talk with the Amir. My instinct is to say nothing on sterling holdings unless the Kuwaitis raise the subject. I hope after what was said this morning that they would consult us before reducing their holdings for political reasons (the £25 million is for the Arab sick and wounded I gather). But I should be grateful for early instructions how to reply to the Prime Minister's questions in paragraph 8 above.

10. The Amir was friendly and relaxed. The Prime Minister, who is more intelligent, seemed irritated and was much more difficult.

Foreign Office pass Immediate Washington 18.

Mr. Arthur

Sent 1300Z 8 June
Recd. 1855Z 8 June

[Repeated as requested]

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Oil Dept.
N.E.A.D.

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SECRET

=====

Mr Weir Amd 8/6
A Jd 8/6 TFB 8/6
A Ech 8/6
(10711/67)

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

BY

13

49

BRITISH EMBASSY
KUWAIT
4 June, 1967.

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 5
9- JUN 1967
BK 10/18

P8

Dear Frank,

I don't know that I have much to add to my letter of 27 May (not to Bahrain), about the Palestine crisis: Johnny Graham is sending Michael Weir a roundup of the week's events, such as they are.

2. The press is still attacking the Americans and us, more for what we might do than for what we have actually done. Otherwise everything is quiet here: people are waiting, rather nervously, some hoping for the war they expect to win, but more, I suspect, wondering how the crisis will affect their summer holidays. The Kuwaitis I have met have been friendly, and almost apologetic for having to keep us at arm's length just now: several (including the Minister of Finance and Oil) have expressed their personal sympathy with me for having arrived at so awkward a time; and one indeed advised me to do nothing for the time being, for whatever I did would be wrong.

3. Whenever Palestine has arisen I have argued our case on the Gulf of Aqaba, which can be stated as a matter of principle, close to the heart of a maritime nation and applicable in other parts of the world. But I cannot say I have made the slightest impression. The Arabs are impervious to arguments of this kind: Aqaba is an Arab gulf and that is that - Israel shouldn't be there anyway.

4. However, if we only had to think of the Kuwaitis, I do not think that we should have much trouble here. But we have the pressure and example of the other Arab states, to which Kuwait is accustomed - no doubt wisely - to yield; and - which is more inscrutable - we have the proletariat (if that is the word for a class that has its own rich men) of the "other Arabs" in Kuwait itself. I cannot judge how much trouble the latter will make: I only know that they are troublesome by nature and that very many of them (particularly the Palestinians) are withdrawing their deposits from the banks. Abdullah Jaber, with whom I had a frank talk last week, thought they might demonstrate against the Embassy - they would "go for the flag", as he put it. But as I said in my telegram no. 202 of 29 May, he did not think that we need fear anything serious except the suspension of oil exports. Incidentally, when I asked him whether the Kuwait Government had considered breaking off relations with us (as the press had said), he replied "How could we? We have a defence agreement."

5. Abdullah Jaber is perhaps too friendly and too optimistic:

/there are

T.F. Brenchley, Esq., C.M.G.,
Foreign Office.

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

there are some Kuwaitis (including the Foreign Minister) who would like to see us suffer more. But I still see no reason to change the assessment, with which my American colleague agrees, that the stoppage of oil exports is the most likely consequence if we get militarily involved in any way against the Arabs. They could hardly do less than this, especially if the Iraqis do more; for they have undoubtedly recognised that the most dangerous thing they could do (quite apart from the possibilities of sabotage) would be to go on raking in the profits if Iraq had forgone them for the sake of Palestine. The question is, will they wish to go further than this and, for example, "nationalise" the K.O.C.? Except perhaps for the B.B.M.E. concession - see my letter under reference - my guess would be "no", unless there is such serious and widespread trouble in the Middle East as a whole that they feel the situation is slipping out of their control. Will they switch funds from London? Again I think not on any large scale - if they thought seriously of this I would expect them to warn me, for it is their strongest card and they know it. Where could they switch to, anyhow, if New York were excluded for the same reason? This is not of course to say that they will not run down their reserves for economic reasons, if they have to live for a time on a much reduced income from oil, if they find themselves compelled to pay for part of the U.A.R. war effort, or if confidence in the banking system falters with spreading disturbances.

6. We have a good deal of credit here, but it is not unlimited, and in a Palestine situation we inevitably make heavy drawings on it. We could still break the bank if we take too many initiatives or get too far ahead of the United Nations ruck.

7. I am sending a copy of this letter to Stewart Crawford.

Yours ever,

Pepper.

(G.G. Arthur)

T 260.

BK

TOP COPY

47

CONFIDENTIAL

Cypher/Cat A

IMMEDIATE KUWAIT TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Telno 258 9 June 1967

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 5
12 JUN 1967
BK 10/18

B (14)

CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 258 of 9 June
Repeated for information to Washington and Bahrain

BK 10/18 (12)

My telegram No. 252 Palestine.

I repeated the performance this morning with the Foreign Minister, who is less well disposed to the British connexion. The argument was frank, not to say sharp at times.

2. Shaikh Sabah repeated that the oil stoppage would be temporary. I said you hoped it would be short, and that the Decree could soon be rescinded. I added that if the break was lengthy, Kuwait might lose some of her markets. Shaikh Sabah observed that this point had been made by the Prime Minister in Parliament and by you to the Kuwait Ambassador. He did not regard it as a threat: Kuwait could live on a much lower income.

3. Shaikh Sabah maintained that the Kuwait Radio had been left free to broadcast any Arab news bulletins that were available, so that the feelings of the different communities in Kuwait should not be stirred up. I said that he could surely not expect me to accept that excuse: the inflammatory nature of the broadcasts was precisely what we were complaining about, and we could prove our point. After some further argument Shaikh Sabah said that Kuwait had lived through three days of madness, and if you had been here, you would congratulate the Kuwait Government on keeping things clam instead of reproaching them for their broadcasts. The Kuwaiti younger generation were hopeless (even his own sons): Everybody here lived on their nerves, for the Kuwaitis were a minority in their own country. Anyhow it was all over now and there could be no more stories of Western involvement. I admitted that there was some force in what Shaikh Sabah had said, but asked whether Kuwait would go on relaying stories from Cairo, which had always lied and would no doubt go on lying.

4. Shaikh Sabah said with a sigh that Kuwait was an Arab country. She was not and would not be a satellite of Egypt. She struck to the principles of Arabism, that was all. Her ancient relations with Britain would surely survive misunderstandings over propaganda and so on: he would like me to assure you solemnly that neither he personally nor the Kuwait Government believed one word of Cairo's allegations of Western intervention (what a change of tune from two days ago): but they could not say this in public.

/5. At

1A

CONFIDENTIAL

Kuwait telegram No. 258 to Foreign Office

5. At one point I remarked that Britain was not only Kuwait's oldest friend, but the only friend from whom she could expe[illegible] real help as opposed to fine words. The Minister replied that every Kuwaiti knew that.

6. Shaikh Sabah said he hoped that we would help our friends the Arabs in the difficult days ahead. I commented that the Arabs often made it difficult for their friends to help them, and that in any case we did not regard Egypt as a friend. He said he understood this: what he had immediately in mind was help for Jordan - Kuwait was giving £5 million and hoped Her Majesty's Government would do something too. He would also like you to know that Kuwait had advised Lebanon and Jordan not to rush into a break with the United Kingdom.

7. Shaikh Sabah asked that arms supplies to Kuwait should be resumed. I said I would enquire about this, but that it would help if Kuwait accepted the cease fire demanded by the United Nations. At this point Shaikh Sabah's reason left him again: he would not accept the cease fire, Kuwait had no common boundary with Israel, Iraq and Saudi Arabia had received arms from Britain without accepting the previous cease fire, and Kuwait could get arms from Belgium anyhow. When he calmed down, I repeated that we would let him know how things stood. I hope we can continue to supply if only for commercial reasons.

8. Shaikh Sabah finally said that he had heard you say that the Arabs were like the Irish - they let their emotions run away with them. He thought this was very true and he was going to write you a letter to thank you for this friendly comparison.

Foreign Office please pass Immediate to Washington 21.

Mr. Arthur

Sent 1230Z/9 June 1967
Recd 1457Z/9 June 1967

[Repeated as requested]

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FFFFF

SECRET AND PERSONAL

BRITISH EMBASSY

KUWAIT

9 June, 1967.

(10711/67)

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 5
13 JUN 1967
BK 10/18

15

44

Dear Frank,

I do not suppose that you have any more time to read letters on the Palestine affair than I have to write them. But I think it might be useful to give you and Stewart Crawford some background to my interview with the Amir and the Prime Minister yesterday morning which was reported in my telegram no. 252.

2. I think the Amir must have been hoping to see me, for it was after 8 o'clock when we asked for the interview, and I was received at 9.30. As soon as I had said my piece, the Amir explained his ideas on oil (paragraph 3 of my telegram under reference) in a conspiratorial fashion. He was feeling very pleased with himself: he said he thought Kuwait had been very clever - even at Dhahran there had been some sabotage to Aramco installations (let us hope he is not speaking too soon!) He did not give me any opportunity to discuss the practicability of his ideas - he brushed aside such details. I could not discover whether anybody else, except the Prime Minister, was privy to his thoughts on this question. I have commented on them in my telegram no. 259.

3. His line on Kuwait Radio was not entirely satisfactory. I pressed him hard on the Bahrain point (Bahrain telegram no. 387 to Foreign Office) and his only reply was that he could not believe that many people in Bahrain really listened to Kuwait: he was sure the B.B.C. Arabic Service had a wider audience there. At one stage I went so far as to say that we were reaching the position when people thought that Cairo Radio was enemy no. 1 and Kuwait Radio enemy no. 2, but he would not have it. He claimed that he had given the instructions for Kuwait Radio to avoid inflammatory political comment, but he could hardly stop them giving precedence to straight news reports - whether true or false - from other Arab countries. As a matter of fact I have been told (I have not had time to listen myself) that the tone of Kuwait Radio has been somewhat better today; and he did in the end agree with Shaikh Jabir (after the latter had joined us) that something should be done to ease off the broadcasting ("nukhaffif" was the word they used).

4. Shaikh Jabir was obviously far from pleased that the Amir had sent for him. He was wearing dark glasses, and I found it impossible to discover what effect (if any) my representations had on him. But the presence of the two men together was most educative: the Amir friendly and devious, and Shaikh Jabir

/stronger,

T.F. Brenchley, Esq., C.M.G.,
Foreign Office.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

stronger, sharper and colder. There was one most illuminating moment: when they were tackling me about the £25 million (paragraph 8(a) of my telegram no. 252), the Amir started to tell me what they wanted the money for. Shaikh Jabir interrupted him very sharply and said: "What we want it for has got nothing to do with them". The Amir said scarcely another word after that. My impression was that the Amir would not stand a chance if there were a struggle between the two; but I suppose it is too early for me to make confident judgments of that kind.

5. I have reported my later interview with the Foreign Minister fairly fully in my telegram no. 258. I find Shaikh Sabah a difficult customer. He is quick and normally urbane: he likes to speak strongly at times, but does not enjoy the reverse process. We did some pretty straight talking this morning, and I don't suppose that I have improved my image with him. But I am sure that it was right to pull the Kuwaitis up fairly sharply at this time. Just before I left I said that the Kuwait Government were always telling us that we must understand their difficulties, and we always tried to do so. But I should like to remind him that the British Government had difficulties too, and I hoped that the Kuwait Government would sometimes make a similar effort to understand. He seemed to take this in good part.

6. I suppose all Arabs live in a dream world, but the inhabitants of Kuwait seem further removed from reality than most just now. They and their brethren are still winning great victories over the Zionist gangs, and heroic Kuwait has refused the cease-fire. What I fear most now is the delayed shock of reality: as my Italian colleague says, the whale is at its most dangerous when it whips its tail before expiring. There is also the possibility of the collapse of the whole credit structure: the "other Arabs" are creating a run on the banks, tradesmen are demanding cash, and the Kuwait Currency Board simply does not have the notes. When the Banks re-open tomorrow there may be trouble (see paragraph 6 of my telegram no. 252). But all is still calm today. In the matter of security, the authorities have done pretty well so far; and although the outward calm is founded on unreality, we have at the other end of the scale the refreshing sight of General Mubarak turning to his English friends to weep on their shoulders and to curse the Egyptians in the finest barrack-room language which Sandhurst can teach.

7. If we get through the next week or two without disturbances, our position here should be strong. Unless they go right off their heads, the Kuwaitis will need friends and will have to turn to us. How we should use our new strength, if we acquire it, depends on so many factors (principally what happens to Nasser) that it is impossible to go into it now; and we may still run into trouble if we get too closely mixed up in a Middle Eastern settlement which the Arabs think is too favourable to Israel. I must say that I should feel a lot happier here if the Kuwaitis

/did not

did not have such large sterling holdings to hold over our heads. I hope you will let me know immediately if there are any signs of "political" withdrawals.

8. I am sending a copy of this letter to Stewart Crawford.

Yours ever

(G.G. Arthur)

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Cypher/Cat A

PRIORITY KUWAIT TO FOREIGN OFFICE

TOP COPY

RECEIVED
ARCHIVES
13 JUN 1967
BK 10/18

[illegible]no 292 12 June, 1967

CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No.292 of 12 June,
Repeated for information to Amman, Jedda and Bahrain.

My telegram No.258 (not to all) paragraph 6: Palestine.

Though he is neither particularly wise, Foreign Minister's advice about Jordan is sound. There is a continuous stream of news of donations from Britain to Israel. Nothing to show any sympathy for the Arabs.

2. From point of view of this post the most effective single thing we could do at the moment would be to make a gift to Jordan and give it wide publicity. Kuwaitis regard Jordan as Britain's only old friend in the Levant, and they expect us to help her as we would help themselves or another Gulf State. She is also in the greatest need.

Foreign Office please pass Amman 23.

Mr. Arthur

Sent 0600Z/12 June
Recd 1124Z/12 June

. [Repetition to Amman referred for Departmental decision].

FO/CO/WH DISTRIBUTION
Eastern Dept.

TELEGRAM SECTION Eastern B **YTC/1**
Room [redacted] K.C.S.
Communications Department

BK 10/18 43

* **Please send copies of the following telegram**

* **Copy/ies of the following telegram has/have been sent**

[*delete as applicable]

Kuwait 292 12/6/67

TO:

Arab/Israel dispute
distr.

(Signed) .....

(Department) .....

(Date) .....

Action taken in Communications Department :

(Initials) CMB **(Date)** 12/6

AFTER ACTION THIS FORM SHOULD BE SENT TO THE APPROPRIATE ARCHIVES DIVISION FOR RETENTION

CONFIDENTIAL

(17)

RECEIVED IN
CAB. W.S No. 5
14 JUN 1967
BKY0/18

Cypher/Cat A

PRIORITY KUWAIT TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Telno 296 12 June 1967

CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 296 of 12 June.
Repeated for information to Amman, Jedda and Bahrain.

My telegram 292 - sent to Mr. Adamson (temp file) 13/6

First line should read "... neither particularly friendly nor particularly wise ...".

Foreign Office pass Amman 24.

Mr. Arthur Sent 1500Z 12 June
Recd 0903Z 13 June

[Repeated as requested]

FO/CO/WH.DISTRIBUTION
Eastern Dept.

QQQQ

CONFIDENTIAL

Eastern B 41

TELEGRAM SECTION YTC/1
Room 124 K.C.S.
Communications Department

BK 10/12

* ~~**Please send copies of the following telegram**~~

* **Copy/ies of the following telegram has/have been sent**

[*delete as applicable]

N-296 from Kuwait — 12.6.64

TO:

Arab/Israel dispute distribution

(Signed) .....

(Department) .....

(Date) .....

Action taken in Communications Department :

(Initials) ..... (Date) 14/6/64

AFTER ACTION THIS FORM SHOULD BE SENT TO THE APPROPRIATE ARCHIVES DIVISION FOR RETENTION

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BK (18)
AIDS
2116 D.E.
14/6

BRITISH EMBASSY
KUWAIT

9 June, 1967.

39

(10711)

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES
14 JUN 1967
BK 10/18

Dear Michael,

BK 10/18 (11)

The Ambassador said in paragraph 5 of his letter 10711 of 4 June to Frank Brenchley that he doubted if the Kuwaitis would switch funds out of London even if we became militarily involved against the Arabs.

BK 10/18 (12)

2. The crisis has developed with a speed and in a direction that we did not foresee when that letter was written, but his interview with the Amir on 8 June, recorded in his telegram no.252, has shown that at any rate so far, the Kuwaitis have drawn money out of London that they needed, but not to switch on political grounds. Nevertheless there has been one call in Kuwait to withdraw Kuwait's sterling balances. Al Talia of 7 June wrote that the citizens of Kuwait were wondering what would be the fate of the Kuwait funds deposited in the banks of Britain and the United States. Those in the know it added had said that these funds piled up in British and United States banks would "go to the enemy on the day of battle". This would be unacceptable to Kuwaitis.

***** 3. I enclose two extra copies of this letter.

Yours ever

(J.A.N. Graham)

M.S. Weir, Esq.,
Arabian Department,
Foreign Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

p.a. 21/6

19

Registry No.

DEPARTMENT BK 10118

* Date and time (G.M.T.) telegram should reach addressee(s) ..... AJDS 11.19/6

(Date) ..... Ellis Olds 16/6

Despatched .....

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION	PRIORITY MARKINGS
Top Secret Secret Confidential Restricted Unclassified	Emergency }* Immediate } Priority Routine

En Clair.
Code
Cypher

[*Security classification —if any*] CONFIDENTIAL

[*Codeword—if any*] .....

Addressed to KUWAIT

telegram No ..... *(date)* .....

And to .....

repeated for information to Washington, UK Mis New York,

Bahrain, Jedda

Saving to .....

Draft Telegram to:—

KUWAIT

No. .....

(Date) .....

And to:—

Repeat to:—

Washington
UK Mis N.Y.
Bahrain
Jedda

Saving to:—

He personally would like to see an initiative towards getting the Israelis back to where they were on 4 June.

Distribution:—

FO/CO/WH
Arabian Dept

Copies to:—

Cleared 14.6

The Kuwaiti Ambassador called on the PUS and the Minister of State separately on 12 June ~~yesterday~~ at his own request to discuss the Middle East crisis. He argued that Britain should take the lead in working out a settlement and that this would in itself provide the practical answer to the allegations of our involvement with the Israeli attack. The United Nations was an important factor in the situation but they could not deal with the whole problem although the four great powers might do so ~~deal with it~~ under a UN umbrella. There was no prospect whatsoever of the Arabs and Israelis sitting down face to face themselves.

2. Mr. Thomson replied that to us the most important parts of the Middle East in terms of our direct interests were the Gulf and South Arabia. A tragic feature of the conflict was that it had damaged our relations with States in the Arabian peninsula. Above all we hoped that none of our friends believed the Egyptian story of Anglo/US intervention on Israel's behalf even if they did not say as much publicly. We had no illusions

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

about our power to shape a settlement. Our influence in the Middle East was to be compared to that of France and not that of the US or USSR. For the moment we were concentrating on reducing the human suffering caused by the war and were sending help to the Jordan refugees. We were also urging the Israelis not to add to the already existing refugee problem. ~~But in our view there were two essential prerequisites to a final settlement Israel's withdrawal from the territory she had just occupied and the recognition by the Arab states of Israel's right to live.~~

3. Asked about the resumption of oil supplies Shaikh Salem said the answer lay with Britain. Britain's actions would give the Kuwait Government the strength to help her and to convince others that there had been no British involvement in the war. He suggested that we were well placed amongst the four powers to shape a settlement (favourable of course to the Arabs) because of our influence in Washington and because of the sympathy with which a Labour Government would be heard in Moscow.

4. The Ambassador appeared to dismiss Cairo Radio's allegations of British intervention but went on to draw a distinction with Mr Thomson between ourselves and the Americans. He said he believed that we had not been involved but professed to be convinced there was something in the story of US involvement. How could the Israelis have defeated such overwhelmingly superior forces without outside help, including for example information on Jordanian military dispositions? Mr. Thomson reiterated that we were completely convinced that the Americans were not involved. We should know since we had worked closely with them on the Gulf of Aqaba problem in an effort to avert an outbreak of war (and to save the Middle East from the disaster that had now overtaken it). Nobody had been more surprised than we ourselves when the fighting broke out. We had even begun to feel that the danger was receding.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

1116

Too early to say what the shape of a final settlement might be. But it would include withdrawal by Israel

Sir D. Allen

I suggest that for purposes of informing Kuwait you could combine action on this and the forthcoming record of the Minister of State's talk with the Ambassador.

PHGB

(P.H. Gore-Booth)
13 June, 1967.

Arabian Dept

Please take this on, after receiving a record of Mr. Thomson's talk this afternoon.

13/6.

Draft submitted.

CONFIDENTIAL 14/6

Mr. Thomson

Talk with the Kuwait Ambassador

The Kuwait Ambassador called this morning at his own request, accompanied by his Minister, Mr. Adel Jarrah. The Ambassador said that he would like, in the spirit of our last meeting, to have a general discussion of the present situation and what should be done next. He asked me for H.M.G.'s views on this.

2. I said that it was a little early to give him a helpful view because we were still considering the various elements in the situation and I could not give him much firm guidance at the moment. It seemed to me, however, that we must try now to work calmly for a more enduring arrangements, presumably using the United Nations as far as possible as an intermediary. I asked the Ambassador if he could do some thinking aloud. Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah said he was not surprised to have the question returned to him and he would say right away that he saw no prospect (he said "in my lifetime") of any Arab leader sitting down with the Israelis at a table. This talk was quite unpractical. I said that, although a certain Egyptian gentleman was doing the Arabs great harm by talking on the radio and television in terms of people being assassinated if they did this, I could quite see that at the present moment Arab leaders would find this very difficult indeed. What, however, would the Ambassador suggest as a way of getting any movement going or, alternatively, as a starting point for a dialogue helped on by others. The Ambassador thought that the 1947 U.N. Settlement might provide a starting point, though he emphasised that

this/

this was purely a personal idea and had no authority from his Government.

3. The Ambassador went on to say that in these circumstances it was for the great powers to find a way towards an answer and in this Great Britain had a "special obligation". This derived from our history, our friendships and our interests in the area and made some initiative by us inescapable.

4. I pointed out that we were certainly anxious to be helpful but that ofcourse our ability to influence events was not the same as it was, say, 50 years ago. The Ambassador replied that if we did not try the French might well do so and take our place; I replied that their possibilities were limited since they had not got the real power either.

5. I asked Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah what he personally would like to see us do. He said he would like to see an initiative towards getting the Israelis back to where they were on 4 June. I pointed out that quite apart from whether this was practical, the position had by then been prejudiced by unilateral acts on the part of Nasser, directed against the United Nations among others. That being so, 4 June might turn out to be hardly realistic as a date. He had suggested that the "great powers" should agree and find an answer; I expressed the thought that while agreement by the great powers was most desirable, one great power, having failed to give military

support/

support, seemed now to be promoting disagreement and in any case sooner or later the people who actually lived in the area would have to acknowledge each other's existence. This might in the end take the form for quite a time of "unfriendly co-existence" but this would have to be the aim since, if people took the line that Israel should be abolished, then the prospect of agreement was ruled out.

6. I suggested that our ability to help had been severely curtailed by the big lie and the reluctance so far of our Arab friends to take issue with it. Both the Ambassador and the Minister said that while of course they did not believe in the big lie for a moment, the way to turn President Nasser's lie against himself was really for us to say and do things which would demonstrate that, far from being accomplices of the Israelis, we had views and intentions which were not consistent with participation on their side. If we could do this we could revive the spirits of moderates and people friendly to Britain and this was urgently needed.

7. I said finally that while I could not anticipate what Ministers would do, and while I could obviously not hold out expectations that we should do anywhere near 100% what the Arabs would like us to do, I felt justified expressing the hope that we would find ourselves able to do and say things in the near future which the Arabs ought to find friendly and encouraging. We were not people who promised big things and then did not fulfil them; we preferred to promise modest things and then stick to them.

8. The Ambassador said he hoped things would move in this direction because it was very important in the interests both of Kuwait and of Britain that we should

resume/

resume the trade in oil on a basis of goodwill. Interruption did not pay either of us even if we could both live without it.

... ...

Roughly speaking, we c[redacted]pieces out of the wedding cake while tactfully concealing the knowledge that a knife lay concealed inside it. I think it should help to go on doing this, both to "show willing" and to probe our way towards some point where an Arab/Israel dialogue at, possibly, several removes can be started.

(P.H. Gore-Booth)
13 June, 1967.

Copied to: Sir D. Allen
Sir R. Jackling
Mr. Rose
Mr. Brenchley
Mr. Morris

BK 10/18

(20)

CONFIDENTIAL

BRITISH EMBASSY

KUWAIT

15 June, 1967

31

(11312/67)

RECEIVED IN
ARCHIVES No. 5
20 JUN 1967
BK 10/18

Dear Frank,

You may have felt (paragraph 6 of my telegram no. 252 of 8 June) that the B.B.M.E. took a disproportionate amount of my interview with the Amir.

2. It did. But I am glad to hear that on this subject at any rate, what I said was not without effect. The Amir did in fact send a message to the Manager of the B.B.M.E. when the banks re-opened last Saturday, to ask how things were going. We have also heard from Khalid Marzuq (Deputy Chairman of the Commercial Bank) that the Amir recently told him that the thing Al Sabah really cared about in the last resort was the British connection and that he (the Amir) was determined that the B.B.M.E. should remain in business.

Yours ever,

(G.G. Arthur)

T.F. Brenchley, Esq., C.M.G.,
Foreign Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

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RECEIVED IN
ARCHIVES No. 5
16 JUN 1967
BK 10/18

27

Mr. Weir

Discussion with Kuwait Ambassador

I have recorded the highlights of my talk with the Kuwait Ambassador in the telegram sent to-day to Mr. Arthur. The other points are as follows.

2. When we went through the "wicked, big lie" the Ambassador asked me how I could make so categorical a statement in the light of the evidence given by the captured Israeli pilot. I replied that, in a country which had been through two world wars in my lifetime, one became very suspicious of stories attributed to prisoners-of-war, and I would need a great deal more evidence to be impressed. The Ambassador asked me what I would think in the hypothetical event of an American or British plane being brought down in Arab territory. I said I thought the hypothesis was wildly improbable; but, of course, if there were such a story, one would want to check it extremely carefully, and this one would both want and be prepared to do.

3. The Ambassador seemed satisfied with these replies and the Minister suggested that, in addition to inviting the United Nations generally to come and see for themselves, we might make a special impact by inviting the people who had made the allegations to have a look.

/4. In

4. In regard to the history of the whole event, I stressed the point that the proceedings of "a certain kind of Arab leadership" had created tension on the basis of inadequate resources, and the whole enterprise had ended in disaster.

5. The assurances which the Ambassador gave me about oil were clearly the reproduction of a carefully drafted instruction and I expressed appreciation with, I hope, sufficient local fulsomeness. I think the turning-point in the interview was somewhere about here.

6. Towards the end, the Ambassador said that it was really disappointing the degree to which not only people individually but the media of publicity seemed instinctively to take a pro-Israeli and anti-Arab line. Surely it was the duty of the British Government to see that a proper balance was created? Indeed, we were doing ourselves a disservice because the press had taken no notice of the Arab communiqué issued after the interview with the Foreign Secretary, the publication of which would in fact have been helpful to H.M. Government.

7. Finally, he referred to an extremely rude programme in "24 Hours" on (?) 5 June by one Samuel Britten, which was very offensive to the régime in Kuwait.

/8. I

8. I told the Ambassador that I could sympathise with him, having been in the business myself, but that equally I knew what immensely hard work one had to do oneself in order to ensure that a particular point of view was properly taken account of. H.M. Government had indeed tried to be fair to both sides in the statements by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, and we would, of course, note what the Ambassador said. But we could not control the media of publicity who were indeed often strikingly disobliging to HLM. Government. I hoped therefore that he and his Arab colleagues would get to work in an energetic but wise manner to ensure that their friends in this country help them where they could to make sure that their case, like that of the Israelis, was properly presented. I did add that they must understand that there was a double motive in this country for sympathy to the Israelis, namely, a rebound from the sufferings of the Jews under Hitler and an instinctive chivalrous feeling, particularly by people who did not know any details, in favour of a small country surrounded by enemies who appeared to have the support of a great Power, the Soviet Union.

/9. At

9. At the end of the meeting I made something of a moral oration to the effect th I felt that he with his religion and background and I with mine shared an admiration for the basic virtues such as courage and truth, two virtues which I felt above all were demanded by the present situation. The Ambassador took the cue, and also said that as good relations between Britain and Kuwait had existed long before oil was discovered in the latter, so he hoped that they would be perpetuated.

Phil S

(P. H. Gore-Booth)
8 June, 1967.

Copied to: Sir Denis Allen
Sir Roger Jackling
Mr. Brenchley
Mr. Moore
Mr. Arthur, Kuwait.

CONFIDENTIAL

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 5
15 JUN 1967
BK 10/18

20

Mr. Westbrook

CALL BY KUWAITI AMBASSADOR

The Kuwait Ambassador, Shaikh Salem al-Sabah, is calling on Mr. Thomson at his own request at 4.30 p.m. today.

2. The Ambassador presumably wants to talk about the general Middle East situation although his Embassy was reluctant to say precisely what he wishes to discuss. I therefore attach a brief note on Kuwait's performance in the Arab/Israel conflict, and records of what passed at the Ambassador's most recent calls on the Foreign Secretary and the Permanent Under Secretary.

... Flag A
Flag B
Flag C

(A. J. D. Stirling)
13 June 1967

CONFIDENTIAL

K U W A I T

General

Kuwait was among the first to declare that she would stop the flow of oil to those who 'helped Israeli aggression'. A Kuwaiti army contingent was sent to the UAR at the outbreak of hostilities and, so far as we know, she has not yet 'accepted' the cease fire. (The contingent did not, we believe, go into action). Kuwait Radio has relayed the big lie from Cairo with continued ill effects on popular opinion in Kuwait and the lower Gulf.

Sterling

Despite intense speculation in the British press the Kuwaitis have so far not made any 'political' sterling withdrawals, although a £25 million drawing is being made in order to contribute to the United Arab Command. H.M. Ambassador has discretion to say that we are glad Kuwait has not used her holdings to bring political pressure to bear on us and to point out again the advantages Kuwait derives from them. He considers it best to say nothing on sterling holdings unless the Kuwaitis raise the subject.

Oil

Production has virtually stopped and our latest information is that the oil companies' local staff are nearly all on strike. The Amir has said to H.M. Ambassador that the stoppage of oil exports to ourselves and the U.S. was the least the Government could do but that the stoppage would be only temporary and that as long as British and American ports were not shown on the manifest ships could take the oil where we liked. We do not propose to encourage the Kuwait Oil Company to take advantage of this unless a serious oil shortage develops in the U.K. /(It

(It would be best not to mention the Amir's offer to Shaikh Salem who may be unaware of it). The Kuwaiti Government will certainly be doing their best to get production re-started even if exports to Britain are not resumed as quickly as the authorities clearly hope. The Secretary of State has already spoken very strongly to Shaikh Salem about the stoppage (see attached telegram No. 275 to Kuwait). It might therefore be as well for Mr. Thomson not to raise the question himself.

... Flag B

Defence

The British Liaison Team in Kuwait have not been affected by the crisis and have continued to carry out their normal duties in helping the Kuwait forces with training and maintenance. Our defence commitment to Kuwait is the strongest point to make in reminding the Kuwaitis that if they expect us to be understanding towards them in Arab matters we have a right to consideration too.

Internal Situation

The Government has so far kept law and order quite well. Very slight damage was caused to the Embassy by demonstrations early last week but since then things have been quiet. Few British subjects have left the country and H.M. Ambassador's present view is that general evacuation will not be required. A break in diplomatic relations now seems unlikely.

CONFIDENTIAL

CYPHER/CAT A

[redacted]DIATE FOREIGN OFFICE TO KUWAIT

TELNO 275 6 JUNE, 1967 (EASTERN)

CONFIDENTIAL
ADDRESS TO KUWAIT TELEGRAM NUMBER 275 OF 6 JUNE AND TO BAGHDAD
REPEATED FOR INFORMATION TO WASHINGTON, PARIS, HAGUE, JEDDA,
BAHRAIN.

OIL CLOSURES.

I SUMMONED THE KUWAIT AMBASSADOR AND IRAQI CHARGE THIS AFTERNOON AND SPOKE TO THEM VERY STRONGLY.

2. I SAID THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO TRUTH IN THE STORIES OF BRITISH AIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONFLICT. I WAS AMAZED THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS HAD GIVEN SUCH FABRICATIONS ANY CREDENCE. WHY HAD THEY NOT CHECKED WITH ME INSTEAD OF TAKING UNILATERAL ACTION? I COULD HAVE TOLD THEM THAT THE STORIES WERE BOTH UNTRUE AND PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE. BRITISH AIRCRAFT CARRIERS HAD BEEN OVER 1,000 MILES AWAY AND STATIC IN HARBOUR AT MALTA AND ADEN. MODERN AIRCRAFT COULD NOT EVEN TAKE OFF FROM STATIC CARRIERS.

3. I URGED THAT THE UNILATERAL ACTION TAKEN SHOULD BE REVERSED RAPIDLY AND GAVE A CLEAR WARNING THAT IF THIS WERE NOT DONE WE SHOULD NEED TO CONSIDER HOW WE COULD AVOID BEING EXPOSED TO POLITICAL BLACKMAIL OF THIS KIND IN FUTURE. THEY SHOULD NOT FORGET THAT OIL WAS A SURPLUS COMMODITY.

4. BOTH REPRESENTATIVES UNDERTOOK TO REPORT WHAT I HAD SAID URGENTLY TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS.

/5. MR

CONFIDENTIAL

FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM NO.275 TO KUWAIT

3. MR BRENCHLEY SUBSEQUENTLY TELEPHONED THE SAUDI AMBASSADOR AND SPOKE TO HIM ON THE LINES OF PARA 2 ABOVE, EXCEPT THAT HE SAID WE WERE GLAD THERE HAD BEEN NO REPORT OF SIMILAR PRECIPITATE ACTION BY HIS GOVERNMENT. HE TOO UNDERTOOK TO REPORT URGENTLY MY ASSURANCES ABOUT OUR NON-INVOLVEMENT.

SOSFA SENT 2212Z/6 JUNE

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EASTERN DEPT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CY[redacted]R/CAT A AND BY BAG

IMMEDIATE FOREIGN OFFICE TO KUWAIT

TELNO. 298 8 JUNE, 1967 (EASTERN)

CONFIDENTIAL

ADDSD KUWAIT TELNO. 298 OF 8/6 RPTD FOR INFMN SAVING BAHRAIN (RES) AND WASHINGTON.

YOUR TELEGRAM NO.240

MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

FOLLOWING FROM PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY.

I INVITED KUWAIT AMBASSADOR TO CALL THIS MORNING: HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS MINISTER WHO ACTED AS INTERPRETER AND ALSO TOOK SOME PART.

2. I TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT MY PURPOSE IN SUGGESTING HIS VISIT WAS TO HAVE A QUIET AND SOBER TALK ABOUT WHERE WE SHOULD ALL GO IN THE FUTURE AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE LAST THREE WEEKS' TRAGIC EVENTS. I DID NOT WANT TO LINGER OVER THESE BUT I FELT BOUND TO EMPHASISE THAT ONE REASON FOR MY FEELING OF URGENCY IN TALKING WITH HIM WAS THAT THERE WAS A DANGER OF THE POLICY OF ARAB GOVERNMENTS BEING INFLUENCED BY WHAT WAS NOT JUST A LIE BUT A VERY BIG AND WICKED LIE ABOUT AMERICAN AND BRITISH PARTICIPATION. AMBASSADOR CATECHISED ME CLOSELY ABOUT THE LIE AND I APPEARED TO PASS THE EXAMINATION.

3. WE DISCUSSED NEUTRAL ATTITUDE OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WHICH HE ACCEPTED AND HOPED THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO PURSUE. ON OIL HE SAID THAT IN THE FACE OF A UNANIMOUS DECISION BY THE ARAB GOVER-

/- NMENTS. KUWAIT

CONFIDENTIAL

NMENTS, KUWAIT REALLY HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ACT AS SHE HAD DO[redacted] HE THOUGHT THAT THE STOPPAGE WOULD BE QUOTE TEMPORARY UNQUOTE AND IN THE MEANTIME HE COULD ASSURE ME THAT THE KUWAIT GOVERNMENT ATTACHED THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO THE SAFETY BOTH OF THE BRITISH COMMUNITY AND OF INSTALLATIONS IN WHICH BRITAIN HAD AN INTEREST. I EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION AND SAID THAT WHAT HE TOLD ME CORRESPONDED EXACTLY WITH THE ASSURANCES GIVEN TO YOU.

4. HE ASKED ME FOR A RECITAL OF RECENT EVENTS. WITHOUT USING THE WORDS QUOTE U A R UNQUOTE OR QUOTE NASSER UNQUOTE I SAID THAT A CERTAIN TYPE OF LEADERSHIP IN THE ARAB WORLD HAD CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE OF TENSION BASED ON MILITARY AND OTHER RESOURCES POURED IN FROM OUTSIDE BUT WHOSE EFFECTIVENESS HAD BEEN GROSSLY OVER-ESTIMATED. HENCE DISASTER. HE ASKED FOR HELP IN PRESENTING THE ARAB CASE IN THIS COUNTRY, TO WHICH I REPLIED THAT WE WERE ANXIOUS FOR FAIR PLAY FOR EVERYBODY BUT THAT I COULD TELL HIM FROM EXPERIENCE THAT ONE HAD TO WORK VERY HARD ONESELF TO ACHIEVE THIS.

5. FULL ACCOUNT BY BAG. AMBASSADOR SAID THE DISCUSSION HAD BEEN VALUABLE AND HE WOULD LIKE TO DO IT AGAIN. CONVERSATION WHICH HAD BEGUN WITH A CERTAIN FORMAL CHILL ENDED WITH CORDIAL COMPARISON OF BRITISH AND ARAB VIRTUES.

SOSFA SENT 1727Z 8 JUNE

DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION
EASTERN DEPT.
ARABIAN DEPT.
OIL DEPT.
N.E.A.D.

10 JUN 1967
BK 10/18

Mr. Thomson

Talk with the Kuwait Ambassador

The Kuwait Ambassador called this morning at his own request, accompanied by his Minister, Mr. Adel Jarrah. The Ambassador said that he would like, in the spirit of our last meeting, to have a general discussion of the present situation and what should be done next. He asked me for H.M.G.'s views on this.

2. I said that it was a little early to give him a helpful view because we were still considering the various elements in the situation and I could not give him much firm guidance at the moment. It seemed to me, however, that we must try now to work calmly for a more enduring arrangements, presumably using the United Nations as far as possible as an intermediary. I asked the Ambassador if he could do some thinking aloud. Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah said he was not surprised to have the question returned to him and he would say right away that he saw no prospect (he said "in my lifetime") of any Arab leader sitting down with the Israelis at a table. This talk was quite unpractical. I said that, although a certain Egyptian gentleman was doing the Arabs great harm by talking on the radio and television in terms of people being assassinated if they did this, I could quite see that at the present moment Arab leaders would find this very difficult indeed. What, however, would the Ambassador suggest as a way of getting any movement going or, alternatively, as a starting point for a dialogue helped on by others. The Ambassador thought that the 1947 U.N. Settlement might provide a starting point, though he emphasised that

this/

this was purely a personal idea and had no authority from his Government.

3. The Ambassador went on to say that in these circumstances it was for the great powers to find a way towards an answer and in this Great Britain had a "special obligation". This derived from our history, our friendships and our interests in the area and made some initiative by us inescapable.

4. I pointed out that we were certainly anxious to be helpful but that ofcourse our ability to influence events was not the same as it was, say, 50 years ago. The Ambassador replied that if we did not try the French might well do so and take our place; I replied that their possibilities were limited since they had not got the real power either.

5. I asked Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah what he personally would like to see us do. He said he would like to see an initiative towards getting the Israelis back to where they were on 4 June. I pointed out that quite apart from whether this was practical, the position had by then been prejudiced by unilateral acts on the part of Nasser, directed against the United Nations among others. That being so, 4 June might turn out to be hardly realistic as a date. He had suggested that the "great powers" should agree and find an answer; I expressed the thought that while agreement by the great powers was most desirable, one great power, having failed to give military

support/

support, seemed now to be promoting disagreement and in any case sooner or later the people who actually lived in the area would have to acknowledge each other's existence. This might in the end take the form for quite a time of "unfriendly co-existence" but this would have to be the aim since, if people took the line that Israel should be abolished, then the prospect of agreement was ruled out.

6. I suggested that our ability to help had been severely curtailed by the big lie and the reluctance so far of our Arab friends to take issue with it. Both the Ambassador and the Minister said that while of course they did not believe in the big lie for a moment, the way to turn President Nasser's lie against himself was really for us to say and do things which would demonstrate that, far from being accomplices of the Israelis, we had views and intentions which were not consistent with participation on their side. If we could do this we could revive the spirits of moderates and people friendly to Britain and this was urgently needed.

7. I said finally that while I could not anticipate what Ministers would do, and while I could obviously not hold out expectations that we should do anywhere near 100% what the Arabs would like us to do, I felt justified expressing the hope that we would find ourselves able to do and say things in the near future which the Arabs ought to find friendly and encouraging. We were not people who promised big things and then did not fulfil them; we preferred to promise modest things and then stick to them.

8. The Ambassador said he hoped things would move in this direction because it was very important in the interests both of Kuwait and of Britain that we should

resume/

resume the trade in oil on a basis of goodwill. Interruption did not pay either of us even if we could both live without it.

... ...

Roughly speaking, we cut pieces out of the wedding cake while tactfully concealing the knowledge that a knife lay concealed inside it. I think it should help to go on doing this, both to "show willing" and to probe our way towards some point where an Arab/Israel dialogue at, possibly, several removes can be started.

(P.H. Gore-Booth)

13 June, 1967.

Copied to: Sir D. Allen
Sir R. Jackling
Mr. Rose
Mr. Brenchley
Mr. Morris

Mr Wilson 14/6

Mr. Chancellor 14/6

HMT 14/6

CONFIDENTIAL

TOP COPY

CYPHER/CAT A

IMMEDIATE FOREIGN OFFICE TO KUWAIT

TELNO 355 15 JUNE 1967 (BK)

CONFIDENTIAL.

ADDRESSED TO KUWAIT TELEGRAM NO.355 OF 15 JUNE REPEATED FOR INFORMATION TO WASHINGTON, UK MIS NEW YORK, BAHRAIN, JEDDA.

THE KUWAITI AMBASSADOR CALLED ON THE PUS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE SEPARATELY ON 13 JUNE AT HIS OWN REQUEST TO DISCUSS THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. HE ARGUED THAT BRITAIN SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN WORKING OUT A SETTLEMENT AND THAT THIS WOULD IN ITSELF PROVIDE THE PRACTICAL ANSWER TO THE ALLEGATIONS OF OUR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE ISRAELI ATTACK. HE PERSONALLY WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN INITIATIVE TOWARDS GETTING THE ISRAELIS BACK TO WHERE THEY WERE ON 4 JUNE. THE UNITED NATIONS WAS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE SITUATION BUT THEY COULD NOT DEAL WITH THE WHOLE PROBLEM ALTHOUGH THE FOUR GREAT POWERS MIGHT DO SO UNDER A UN UMBRELLA. THERE WAS NO PROSPECT WHATSOEVER OF THE ARABS AND ISRAELIS SITTING DOWN FACE TO FACE THEMSELVES.

2. MR. THOMSON REPLIED THAT TO US THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTS OF THE MIDDLE EAST IN TERMS OF OUR DIRECT INTERESTS WERE THE GULF AND SOUTH ARABIA. A TRAGIC FEATURE OF THE CONFLICT WAS THAT IT HAD DAMAGED OUR RELATIONS WITH STATES IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA. ABOVE ALL WE HOPED THAT NONE OF OUR FRIENDS BELIEVED THE EGYPTIAN STORY OF ANGLO/US INTERVENTION ON ISRAEL'S BEHALF EVEN IF THEY DID NOT SAY AS MUCH PUBLICLY. WE HAD NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT OUR POWER TO SHAPE A SETTLEMENT. OUR INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST WAS TO BE COMPARED TO THAT OF FRANCE AND NOT THAT OF THE US OR USSR. FOR THE MOMENT WE WERE CONCENTRATING ON REDUCING THE HUMAN SUFFERING CAUSED BY THE WAR AND WERE SENDING HELP TO THE JORDAN REFUGEES. WE WERE ALSO URGING THE ISRAELIS NOT TO ADD TO THE

/ ALREADY

CONFIDENTIAL

FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM NO. 355 TO KUWAIT

ALREADY EXISTING REFUGEE PROBLEM.
IT WAS TOO EARLY TO SAY WHAT THE SHAPE OF A FINAL SETTLEMENT MIGHT BE . BUT MAYBE IT WOULD INCLUDE WITHDRAWAL BY ISRAEL AND RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO LIVE.
3. ASKED ABOUT THE RESUMPTION OF OIL SUPPLIES SHAIKH SALEM SAID THE ANSWER LAY WITH BRITAIN. BRITAIN'S ACTIONS WOULD GIVE THE KUWAIT GOVERNMENT THE STRENGTH TO HELP HER AND TO CONVINCE OTHERS THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO BRITISH INVOLVEMENT IN THE WAR. HE SUGGESTED THAT WE WERE WELL PLACED AMONGST THE FOUR POWERS TO SHAPE A SETTLEMENT (FAVOURABLE OF COURSE TO THE ARABS) BECAUSE OF OUR INFLUENCE IN WASHINGTON AND BECAUSE OF THE SYMPATHY WITH WHICH A LABOUR GOVERNMENT WOULD BE HEARD IN MOSCOW.
4. THE AMBASSADOR APPEARED TO DISMISS CAIRO RADIO'S ALLEGATIONS OF BRITISH INVERVENTION BUT WENT ON TO DRAW A DISTINCTION WITH MR. THOMSON BETWEEN OURSELVES AND THE AMERICANS. HE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT WE HAD NOT BEEN INVOLVED BUT PROFESSED TO BE CONVINCED THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE STORY OF US INVOLVEMENT. HOW COULD THE ISRAELIS HAVE DEFEATED SUCH OVERWHELMINGLY SUPERIOR FORCES WITHOUT OUTSIDE HELP, INCLUDING FOR EXAMPLE INFORMATION ON JORDANIAN MILITARY DISPOSITIONS? MR. THOMSON REITERATED THAT WE WERE COMPLETELY CONVINCED THAT THE AMERICANS WERE NOT INVOLVED. WE SHOULD KNOW SINCE WE HAD WORKED CLOSELY WITH THEM ON THE GULF OF AQABA PROBLEM IN AN EFFORT TO AVERT AN OUTBREAK OF WAR AND TO SAVE THE MIDDLE EAST FROM THE DISASTERS WHICH HAD NOW OVERTAKEN IT. NOBODY HAD BEEN MORE SURPRISED THAN WE OURSELVES WHEN THE FIGHTING BROKE OUT. WE HAD EVEN BEGUN TO FEEL THAT AS A RESULT OF OUR EFFORTS THE DANGER WAS RECEDING.

SOSFA SENT 1926Z 15 JUNE 1967

FO/CO/WH DISTRIBUTION
ARABIAN DEPT.

:::::

Registry No.

DEPARTMENT BK

* Date and time (G.M.T.) telegram should reach addressee(s) 15/6

(24)

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION	PRIORITY MARKINGS
~~Top Secret~~ ~~Secret~~ ~~Confidential~~ ~~Restricted~~ Unclassified	~~Emergency~~ } * ~~Immediate~~ } ~~Priority~~ Routine

~~En Clair.~~ ~~Code~~ Cypher

CYPHER

(Date) Despatched 15/6

12

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 5
19 JUN 1967
BK 10/18

[*Security classification —if any*] CONFIDENTIAL

[*Codeword—if any*]

Addressed to KUWAIT

telegram No. 355 *(date)* 15/6

And to

repeated for information to Washington, UK Mis New York, Bahrain, Jedda

Saving to

Draft Telegram to:—
KUWAIT
No. 355
(Date) 15/6

And to:—

Repeat to:— 6660
· Washington
· UK Mis N.Y 2904
· Bahrain 436
· Jedda 917

Saving to:—

He personally would like to see an INITIATIVE taken through the Israelis getting the Israelis back to where they were on 4 June.

Distribution:—
FO/CO/WH
Arabian Dept

Copies to:—

16452
15/6/67

Despatched 14.6
14/6

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

The Kuwaiti Ambassador called on Minister of State (the POS and the separately on 13 June) ~~yesterday~~ at his own request to discuss the Middle East crisis. He argued that Britain should take the lead in working out a settlement and that this would in itself provide the practical answer to the allegations of our involvement with the Israeli attack. The United Nations was an important factor in the situation but they could not deal with the whole problem although the four great powers might ~~deal with it~~ do so under a UN umbrella. There was no prospect whatsoever of the Arabs and Israelis sitting down face to face themselves.

2. Mr. Thomson replied that to us the most important parts of the Middle East in terms of our direct interests were the Gulf and South Arabia. A tragic feature of the conflict was that it had damaged our relations with States in the Arabian peninsula. Above all we hoped that none of our friends believed the Egyptian story of Anglo/US intervention on Israel's behalf even if they did not say as much publicly. We had no illusions

/about

13

about our power to shape a settlement. Our influence in the Middle East was to be compared to that of France and not that of the US or USSR. For the moment we were concentrating on reducing the human suffering caused by the war and were sending help to the Jordan refugees. We were also urging the Israelis not to add to the already existing refugee problem. ~~But in our view there were two essential prerequisites to a final settlement Israel's withdrawal from the territory she had just occupied and the recognition by the Arab states of Israel's right to live.~~

3. Asked about the resumption of oil supplies Shaikh Salem said the answer lay with Britain. Britain's actions would give the Kuwait Government the strength to help her and to convince others that there had been no British involvement in the war. He suggested that we were well placed amongst the four powers to shape a settlement (favourable of course to the Arabs) because of our influence in Washington and because of the sympathy with which a Labour Government would be heard in Moscow.

4. The Ambassador appeared to dismiss Cairo Radio's allegations of British intervention but went on to draw a distinction (with Mr Thomson) between ourselves and the Americans. He said he believed that we had not been involved but professed to be convinced there was something in the story of US involvement. How could the Israelis have defeated such overwhelmingly superior forces without outside help, including for example information on Jordanian military dispositions? Mr. Thomson reiterated that we were completely convinced that the Americans were not involved. We should know since we had worked closely with them on the Gulf of Aqaba problem in an effort to avert an outbreak of war (and to save the Middle East from the disaster that both we and the Americans had been more surprised than we ourselves when the fighting broke out. We had even begun to feel (that as a result of our efforts) the danger was receding.

11/16

It was too early to say what the shape of a final settlement might be. But it might include withdrawal by Israel and recognition of Israel's RIGHT to live.

(83247) (2) 300M 10/65 Pt.S.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

TELEGRAM SECTION
Room 124 K.C.S.
Communications Department

Arabian Dept ... 24

YTC/1

11

* ~~Please send copies of the following telegram~~

* Copy/ies of the following telegram has/have been sent

[*delete as applicable]

No. 355 to Kuwait 15/6/64

TO: Arab/Israel Dispute

(Signed) .....

(Department) .....

(Date) .....

Action taken in Communications Department :

(Initials) ..... (Date) 16/6/64

AFTER ACTION THIS FORM SHOULD BE SENT TO THE APPROPRIATE ARCHIVES DIVISION FOR RETENTION

CONFIDENTIAL

TOP COPY 10

Cypher/Cat A

BAHRAIN TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Telno 427 20 June 1967

RECEIVED IN
ARCHIVES No. 5
21 JUN 1967
SK 10118

CONFIDENTIAL

Addressed to Kuwait telegram No. 83 of 20 June
Repeated for information to Foreign Office

Kuwait Radio.

This is now muchmore moderate in tone. The News Bulletins inevitably quote Arab Statesmen, but we have heard nothing over past few days to which exception could be taken in the commentaries and other programmes.

Mr. Crawford

Sent 0700Z/20 June 1967
Recd 0915Z/20 June 1967

FO/CO/WH DISTRIBUTION
EASTERD DEPT.

CONFIDENTIAL

FFFFF

P.a.

CONFIDENTIAL

BRITISH EMBASSY
KUWAIT . . .

21 June, 1967.

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 5
29 JUN 1967
BK 10/18

(10711)

Kuwait Expeditionary Force

Please refer to your telegram No.79 of 17 June (not copied to the Foreign Office) and my letter 10711 of 4 June to Michael Weir.

2. I am sorry that we did not keep you up to date on the fate of the Kuwait expeditionary force. In the event, the only unit actually to leave Kuwait was the Commando Battalion amounting to some 550 men which left Kuwait by air under the command of Brigadier Saleh as reported in paragraph 2 of my letter. The plan to send additional armoured units by sea and overland had not been put into execution when hostilities broke and almost the first act by the Kuwait Government in the war was to cancel the move.

3. We are still not quite clear about what happened to the unit which was sent. It appears that all but a rear party of about 100 moved forward to el-Arich. According to Kuwait Army sources they were bombed while de-training and then took up a position in the desert some 60 miles away with an Egyptian gunner regiment in support. Having tried to make contact with them by telephone during the night, they drove to where the Egyptians were supposed to be, only to find that they had gone, together with their transport. Eventually, it seems, the majority of the Kuwaitis were able to find their way back across the Canal, although about 100-150 are reported still to be missing. General Mubarak seems to be quite relaxed about their fate, because they are bedouin and will, he is sure, be able to survive. Understandably, however, he has little good to say of the Egyptians.

4. I am copying this letter to Michael Weir in Arabian Department.

(J.A.N. Graham)

H.G. Balfour-Paul, Esq.,
British Residency,
Bahrain.

CONFIDENTIAL

(27)

7

(K 10/18)

Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to the Ambassador for Kuwait, and has the honour to acknowledge receipt of his Note No. 1/100/228-334 of the 5th of June.

Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs avails himself of this opportunity of renewing to the Ambassador for Kuwait the assurances of his highest consideration.

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W. 1.

30 June, 1967.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN

(83126) 8d.8.

Registry No. BK 10/18

~~Top Secret.~~
Secret.
Confidential.
~~Restricted.~~
Unclassified.

3rd person Note

Gibbons. 20/6.

DRAFT

To:—

Kuwait Ambassador

HMPSOSFA the

have the honour to

acknowledge receipt of his

Note No. 1/100/228-334 of the

5th of June, ~~the contents of~~

~~which have been noted.~~

Usual ending

ds 20/6

8

Type 1 +

From

Gibbons.

Telephone No. & Ext.

Department

Arabian

CONFIDENTIAL

10711

BRITISH EMBASSY
KUWAIT.
July 9, 1967.

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 5
13 JUL 1967
BK 10/18

Dear Battiscombe

Kuwait Expeditionary Force

Please refer to Johnny Graham's letter 10711 of 21 June to Balfour Paul.

2. It now appears that the numbers we gave you in para 2 of Graham's letter were not entirely correct. General Mubarak has now rather belatedly confirmed what we had previously learned from other sources that some 1,120 men in all left Kuwait by air. In addition to the 550 men of the Commando Battalion, some 500 men making up No. 5 Infantry Battalion of 6th Infantry Brigade were also sent. As far as we can make out, this latter Battalion together with the Headquarters group remained in reserve in the Canal Zone and was not committed to the battle.

3. As Johnny Graham has repeated in para 5 of his letter 1013 of 2 July to Michael Weir, General Mubarak is anxious to withdraw the contingent to Kuwait as soon as possible but is unable to do so for political reasons. Arrangements are now under way to bring back some 360 men to Kuwait 'on leave', and he is hoping to get away with not having to replace them.

4. I am copying this letter to Balfour Paul in Bahrain.

Yours ever
Christopher

C. C. R. Battiscombe

A. F. D. Chamier, Esq.
Arabian Department, Foreign Office.

Copy to:
M. S. Balfour Paul, Esq.
British Residency, Bahrain.

p.a.

Mr Wilkes
TPB 13/7

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

Kuw. (29)

BRITISH EMBASSY
KUWAIT
9 July, 1967.

5

RECEIVED IN
ARCHIVES No. 5
13 JUL 1967
BK 10118

for entry?

Dear Brenchley,

It was very good of you to take the trouble to let me know, in your letter of 6 July, what Shaikh Sabah al Ahmad said to the Secretary of State in New York.

2. I am not sure whether I should take Shaikh Sabah's remarks as a compliment. They certainly surprised me: as you will have seen from paragraph 5 of my letter (10711/67) of 9 June, I got the impression that he had not greatly enjoyed our discussions during the week of the Arab/Israel war. (18)

3. It is still very difficult to get to know Kuwaitis. They will generally see me in their offices, though some of them do not like doing even that; but they neither issue nor accept invitations. Anglo/Kuwaiti social life is virtually dead - I have only seen two Kuwaitis (both Persians) outside office hours since June 5.

Yours ever

(G.G. Arthur)

T.F. Brenchley, Esq., C.M.G.,
Foreign Office.

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

p.a.

CONFIDENTIAL

TPB 20/7 (30)

10711/67.

BRITISH EMBASSY
KUWAIT
15 July, 1967.

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 5
25 JUL 1967
BK 10/18

. 2

Dear Michael,

Palestine

... I enclose a copy of a minute by Ben Strachan of a conversation with Sayid Ahmad Du'aij, the Director-General of the Planning Board.

2. You may find Du'aij's views interesting, as coming from one of the leaders of the younger generation in Kuwait who is at the same time one of the more moderate and balanced observers. Not everything that he says is very encouraging from our point of view but at least his views show a degree of realism which has been sadly lacking in those of some of his seniors in the Government with whom I have discussed the situation here recently.

3. I saw Du'aij myself this morning and went over much of the same ground. I agree with him in one thing: I hope we shall not try to forget the position of Egypt just because it is awkward for us. We ignore Egypt to our cost. It has nothing to do with Nasser or with Egyptian military failure: Nuri used to keep his eye on Faruq's Egypt, and even those here who are most infuriated with Nasser's leadership will not abandon their hopes of Egypt. Where else indeed can they repose their hopes?

Yours ever

(G.G. Arthur)

M.S. Weir, Esq.,
Arabian Department,
Foreign Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

I called on Ahmad Du'aij, the Director-General of the Planning Board, today and we had a two hour discussion mainly of course on Palestine.

Oil

Du'aij thought that the ban on exports to Britain and America would and should continue. He realised it would have little effect on America, but might inconvenience her particularly as at present she gets her oil for the Vietnam war from the Middle East. He thought Britain also deserved to suffer if only for her inept public relations. He contrasted Britain and France: the attitude of both to the question had been identical, both had been neutral. But De Gaulle had said nice things to the Arabs while unobtrusively supplying the Israelis with arms whereas Wilson had gone out of his way to appear to side with the Israelis over the Tiran Straits question.

He did not think Kuwait would cut off all her oil production. When I asked him about loading British flag tankers he was astonished to hear that there had been a ban on their loading yesterday and was convinced it must have been due to a misunderstanding, since Abdulrahman Atiqi had told him that they would be loaded normally.

I told him that this ban on oil supplies to Britain would greatly strengthen the hand of those in Britain who wanted to see us pull out of the Gulf completely. He agreed, but said that this was inevitable anyhow: the sooner Kuwait tried to come to terms with Iraq the better. She would have to do so some time and he thought the solution might be some sort of association on E.E.C. lines.

Boycott

Dusaij was convinced this would come to nothing, though few Kuwaitis at present will admit it. He had attended a meeting to discuss this and had been alone in pointing out what nonsense it was, though he knew very well that the majority at the meeting privately agreed with him. The Kuwait Government are taking no action to encourage the boycott nor, he was convinced, would they do so. He discounted the likelihood of other Arab countries putting intolerable pressure on Kuwait to do so. He asked me whether I knew where the £10 million Kuwait had given Egypt was at the moment. I hazarded Moscow, at which he roared with laughter and said, No the Midland Bank in London. He claimed it would remain there to pay for vital spare parts etc. which Egypt needed to purchase from Britain. He said that some months ago Mahmoud Younis had toured round visiting the principal canal users asking them to make their payments into Egyptian accounts outside Egypt, so that Egypt could claim to the Russians that she had nothing in the kitty with which to meet payments due on the arms purchased. Thus, since Egypt was using Kuwaiti money to make purchases from Britain and since she knew that the Kuwaitis knew this, it was inconceivable that she would try to pressurise Kuwait into boycotting British goods.

/General

General Comments

Du'aij paid glowing tribute to the B.B.C.'s Arabic Service for its sympathetic and impartial handling of the Palestine issue. It had been widely listened to and had done much to mitigate anti-British feelings aroused by Mr. Wilson. He thought that whereas Arab intellectuals had long since stopped listening to the Voice of the Arabs, even the common people were now sick to death of the excessive and misleading propaganda put out by the Arab radio stations.

He could see no solution to the Palestine question except another war. Western Governments who talked about the Arabs coming to terms with Israel simply had no idea of the realities of politics in the Arab world. He was bitter with the United Nations for failing to uphold its principle that territorial integrity must be respected.

He was highly critical of the Officer Corps in the Arab Armies and agreed that they had become soft and pampered by the military regimes they supported.

He doubted whether the West appreciated that Egypt was, and always would be, the leader of the Arab world simply by virtue of her relative size and resources. Whoever led Egypt whether it was a Nasser or a Faruq, was consequently the leader of the Arab world. He thought one unforeseen consequence of the war was that for the first time the ordinary Egyptian people were roused against Israel. Until this disaster, he thought the average Egyptian could not have cared less about Palestine.

B.L. STRACHAN

(B.L. Strachan)
12 July, 1967.